

Dolly Bestandig

Tape 1 Side A

July 27, 1997

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Abstract

Dolly Bestandig was born on July 24, 1939 in Vilna, Poland. Her father had a degree in physical mathematical engineering and her mother was a famous concert pianist. In 1941 they were forced to live in the crowded Vilna Ghetto for a year before moving to a special camp for 100 engineers and mathematicians. In 1944 they went to the Minsk Ghetto which was a slave camp where her father made railroad tracks, her mother worked with clothing and brushes and Dolly stayed with an old lady. In winter 1944 they were put in a cattle train to Auschwitz where they stayed two months. Dolly had to hold a bath sponge filled with emeralds and diamonds that were later traded for bread for Dolly and cigarettes for her father. Both in Auschwitz and later in Bergen-Belsen, Dolly was placed every day in a garbage can for 12 or 13 hours while her mother worked. Her mother made uniforms by machine and hand-sewing and moved stones for the railroad. Dark, smells and dirt recall her experience. At night Dolly slept with her mother and eight grownups in the Barracks. Every day at 4 AM Dolly had to wake up and stand at Appel. One day her father was put in the gas chamber and the next day Bergen-Belsen was liberated by the English. At first Dolly's mother broke down and said that she did not want to live. At liberation, Dolly weighed as much as a one-year-old and was as tall as a three-year-old. She had typhus, TB, heart trouble and an open palate which required hospital care. They went to Sweden upon invitation by the King of Sweden who accepted all the youngsters from Bergen-Belsen. There Dolly spoke for the first time since being placed in the trash can.

In part two begins with Dolly Bestandig's arrival in Sweden with 100 women from Bergen-Belsen. She is hospitalized for one and one-half years to be cured of TB, typhus, a heart problem and a broken palate before she can go to New York in 1947. Dolly is put in separate hospitals from her mother twice and both times her mother finds her and cleans bathrooms to stay near her. Between the hospitals, they stay with the other women in the King's castle which they find to be an unpleasant experience. Her mother contacts relatives in Mexico and an uncle meet them in New York and take them by train to Mexico City. Dolly finds it hard to speak a proper Spanish and learn the customs but she completes high school, university and gets a Master Degree to become a Hebrew School teacher. She sees a psychologist which helps her recall her experiences but has to give up therapy as the remembrances cause repeated accidents. Her mother remarries but never gets over her experiences. Dolly marries and cannot have children. After ten years, she goes to a New York clinic and finds out that she still has TB so they adopt children. She has a happy family life and plans to write a book about her experiences.

In Dolly's last words, she expresses her love for God and that the Jewish people can give their children and the world their traditions and their legacy. She thanks the countries, including

Mexico, who have permitted the Jewish people to live freely. Dolly is still too upset to enter Germany and the German language reminds her of her concentration camp experiences. She receives reparations but is not happy about it.

Summary

- 00:00 Dolly Bestandig was born Dolly Hirsh (?) Bestandig on July 24, 1939 in Vilna, Poland. Her Hebrew name was Devorah. Her family was in the area since the 17th century. Her grandma was a Gesundheit (?) from Warsaw. She had married at age 22 to a 70-year-old man as his 4th wife. Dolly had uncles all over Europe as some children went to France or Czechoslovakia. Her mother's name was Ruchel Broidu (?) and her father was Alte (?) Hirsh who came from Germany. He had received degrees in physical mathematical engineering from Vilna and Russia. His twin sister died in the Holocaust. Dolly's mother was a famous classic concert pianist. She won the Warsaw Chopin prize. Her parents met in Vilna in 1937 and married the following year. They met at a Jewish social gathering where her father first fell in love with her mother's music and later with her mother. They were both 22 years old.
- 05:00 Dolly's father came from a non-religious family but her mother and grandmother were from very religious descendants of the Vilna Gaon Rabbi. Her mother remained faithful after the War. Dolly was born in a hospital that received Jews. Her mother had to practice the piano eight or nine hours a day and could not cook or change the baby's diapers so the grandma moved in with them. They had a Steinway piano. Dolly's father changed her diapers and loved her very much. The Vilna ghetto opened in 1941 in an old part of the town. They lived close by. In the ghetto, about five or seven extra people moved in with them. It was very crowded. They met a Partisan group in the Vilna Ghetto. They were very afraid. A year later 100 engineers and mathematicians including her father were taken to work on a radio communication project. Her father insisted that she and her mother go with him. It was hard for Dolly's mother to be born rich, visit Paris, graduate from gymnasium and write well, even in Spanish, and then live through the terrible five years of the War.
- 10:00 Her mother was very mentally sick when she left the concentration camp just after the father went to the gas chamber. It was hard for such a privileged person to survive. The food was terrible. Her mother was shot twice by Germans on horseback when she tried to steal potatoes and beets from a field to feed Dolly. Until she was six, Dolly had no milk, eggs or sugar. She was just fed hard bread and soup made with water, potatoes and vegetables. A guard in the special camp for engineers offered to open a gate so the father could escape to Siberia or, perhaps, to the Partisans but he did not want to leave his wife and daughter.

- 15:00 Dolly's mother worked for the Partisans by giving out pamphlets and bringing water and hard bread to the Partisans in hiding. The Germans had Dolly's father work on a project which was the forerunner of TV. Dolly's maternal grandmother was with them. Her paternal grandparents died before her parents married. Her father's only relative was a sister but her mother had 90 relatives in the Ghetto. One had a son, Sheyer (?) Gesundheit (?), an astronomer who discovered a star. Her father's sister inherited a publishing business when the parents died. Some uncles went to Cuba in the 30s and found Dolly in Sweden and brought her to the US.
- 20:00 The family was in the Vilna Ghetto from 1941 to 1942. Then sent to the special engineers camp near Minsk until 1944 when they went to the concentration camp. It was hard for Dolly's mother to leave her relatives and go to the special camp. Her mother was brought up wealthy. The bathroom and slave factory at Bergen-Belsen denigrated her. She never left her home after the War.
- 25:00 After Dolly's father was gassed, her mother wanted to die but she was told to go on living for Dolly's sake. After the special camp, in 1944 they went to the Minsk Ghetto which was a slave camp. Her father had to work like everyone else. He made railroad tracks. The Germans were losing the War. You could survive if you worked hard or you could be put on transport. Dolly stayed with an old lady while her mother worked with clothing and brushes. In Winter 1944 when Dolly was five, they were put in a wagon to Auschwitz. She felt that she could not breathe and they had no water for days. People were dying. Dolly was put on top of other people. She feels special to G-d as she is a living miracle as was permitted to survive. Her father was with her until they got o Auschwitz and then they were separated. Only women were in the camp in Bergen-Belsen. Around December 1944 they went to Auschwitz and only stayed two months.
- 30:00 The entrance was unbelievable. Dolly's grandmother had told her mother to put emeralds and diamonds in a sponge. Dolly kept it at the concentration camps. They had to undress and were shaved. Her mother still looked pretty and strong. They saw children being carried but Dolly's mother had her walk so they were in the line with the living. Her mother got a uniform for herself and a jacket for Dolly. Only her mother was tattooed, not Dolly.
- 35:00 The sponge was all they had left which Dolly held. Her mother worried about their documents, especially her piano degree, which they had to leave. When her mother said, "Essen mien kind," it meant that Dolly was to go into the garbage can. She stayed there all day while her mother worked. They did not see her father but knew that he was transferred to Bergen-Belsen. They had gone to the wire which divided the men and women and found out the men were to be moved soon. Her mother got a package of cigarettes for her father by trading the jewels with the capos and once a month got a piece of dark bread for Dolly by trading the jewels. Her mother made uniforms by machine and

hand-sewing and moved stones for the railroad. She was physically strong. Every night when she returned from work, her mother took her out of the can. Dolly was the only child in the camp. She does not remember seeing children in Sweden although she was in a hospital for children. She thought no children existed until she got to New York.

40:00 Dolly thought that is how one lived and she was small. **Tape 1, Side B.** She grew up in fear and darkness. There were no colors so thought that everything is black. Life was that way. At night she heard people crying and dying. No one was born during that time. Dolly did not speak until she arrived in Sweden. At first the authorities thought she had some sickness which caused her loss of speech. Dolly had fallen in Auschwitz and cut her mouth which hurt her. She had difficulty drinking soup, speaking and crying. She was afraid of the cold and the wet, the shouts of the Germans and the barking dogs. Dolly did not know the sun existed. Her 90 relatives passed away and she is the only survivor. Two of her children are doctors. Neither the Germans nor Hitler won the War, but the survivors as they are alive. Every day her mother put her in the garbage can so they could not find her and gas her, like the Germans did to the other children. Her mother saw many horrors including hair sent to Germany. Molly was in the can at the door of the barracks for 12 or 13 hours each day.

45:00 She wore a jacket. At night she slept with her mother and eight grownups in the barracks so was not cold. She held the sponge the entire time. The jewels in the sponge were what helped her mother obtain food for her. Dolly would take out a diamond at a time for a loaf of bread. She understood Yiddish, Russian and Polish as a child. Now she speaks seven languages. They were in Bergen-Belsen for four months in 1945 so her mother could help in manufacturing clothes and shoes. They were transferred there by a very crowded cattle car. They were probably moved there as Germany was losing the War and the camp was closer to Germany. People died, were thirsty and it was dark in the cattle car. People lay on top of each other. You had to do private things in front of each other.

50:00 Dolly's children know that clothing and furniture must be clean. If Dolly is in the middle of work and she drops coffee on her clothes, she feels they must be changed. Since Dolly has no relatives, she invites 22 to 30 people for Rosh Hashanah and feels she must clean up afterwards as she cannot stand dirt. The dark, smells and dirt recall her experience. While in the trash can, she did not know about toys or children; just thought that was life. In Bergen-Belsen they were forced to stand naked for four to five hours to view people being punished by hanging. She thought that some people are born small and some born big. Dolly was the only one with a mother. Her mother did not embrace her but felt they would survive. Her mother did not mention the piano or her love of music. Her father was not with them in the car on their way to Bergen-Belsen nor were they with him when he died. Dolly was 5 and ½ when she went through the second selection process with her

mother and they passed through. The food was terrible. Her mother and the others were skinny and she saw bones.

- 55:00 Everyone was shaved and had numbers tattooed. They walked on wet stones. In January 1945 Dolly had no shoes and her mother made her some. A famous Rabbi Victor from Mexico came to Bergen Belsen and sent a message to the women that they were going to survive to give them courage. A rumor was that the food was going to be poisoned so the English liberators would not know what happened. The Rabbi said to only eat the bread, not the soup. Many prisoners died after liberation because of the chocolates they were given to eat. Just like in Auschwitz, Dolly was placed every day in a garbage can in Bergen-Belsen for 12 or 13 hours while her mother worked. Inside the can were bones and equipment. The prisoners stood in line at Appel for one or two hours and then Dolly was placed in the can. She could not move during that time; perhaps she slept in the can. She was left with a piece of bread. Dolly was afraid of closed and dark areas. During Appel, Dolly held onto her mother and had no problem to stand still. Appel was at 4 AM and they were checked for typhus and diarrhea.
- 60:00 Sometimes Dolly got washed but she remembers the smell and the dirt. Suddenly everyone screamed, "English coming" and she heard the Germans running. The guards left as they were afraid of the English. Dolly saw a pit of fire as they were burning up documents. She was not placed in the garbage can and there was no 4 AM Appel. She heard shouting and people in unfamiliar uniforms entered and embraced and they were kind including Chaplain Greenbaum (?) and a woman. Her mother smiled. They opened up the wires and men and women ran to each other. Her mother saw her father's friends and they said that her father had gone to the gas chamber the day before. Just two days earlier Dolly's mother sent a package of cigars to Dolly's father. Her mother broke down and said that she did not want to live since all her family is gone and she is all alone.
- 65:00 Someone said to her mother that she still has Dolly. Dolly was afraid as she was the only child. Her mother tried to explain why she did not want to live. They tried to make her understand why she must survive. Dolly thought her mother was not absolutely crazy but wanted to run away from reality (Dolly). It took her mother a day or two before she picked Dolly up. Dolly was fed and given a coat and shoes and something sweet but was not crying or speaking. Days passed before her mother realized that she must live for Dolly's sake. Her mother had no desire to return to Vilna, her hometown. There were three Czech sisters, ages around 18 to 25 who were political prisoners. They were Catholic and their parents were killed. They heard that the King of Sweden will accept all youngsters from Bergen-Belsen to cure them, feed them and live in a castle in Sweden. They asked Dolly's mother to list them as her children
- 70:00 Dolly had typhus, TB, heart trouble and an open palate and required a good hospital. Women touched her every day as they lost all their children and wanted to help her.

When Dolly arrived at the castle, she had to sleep with other people as her mother had a problem. Dolly did not move or talk. Her mother embraced her and held her close. Dolly had no relationship with anyone else. She had probably used the garbage can for elimination as she could not climb out by herself.

75:00 At liberation, Dolly was the weight of a one-year-old and as tall as a 3-year-old. To go to Sweden, her mother told the authorities her name and that she came from Vilna and had 3 daughters and a young sick one. Her mother was 28 or 29 years old at that time. They took a special passenger train to Sweden. The Swedish Army took them off the train to the hospital where Dolly was separated from her mother. There were only women and young girls on the train.

Dolly Bestandig

Tape 2 Side A

July 27, 1997

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Summary

00:00 Dolly Bestandig arrives in Sweden with 100 women ages 17 to 28 or 29, around her mother's age. She and her mother must separate for the first time as she needs a children's hospital and her mother needs a women's hospital. At first her mother gets hysterical. The group has many diseases which might spread so are placed in a hospital. Dolly was the only young child in the group. She is placed in a ward with teenagers where she is the only small person. Her mother might have been in another wing or another building of the same hospital. They had to be disinfected of their contagious diseases. Dolly had TB, typhus and a heart problem. Her mother was not as sick as she was. Dolly was left alone in a white bed with a mattress and sheets and the nurses smiled at her and tried to feed her. The food came out of her nose so she needed to go to another hospital for surgery. Dolly was fed by a tube which went down her throat. She was alone for two or three months with no one to speak to. The nurses gave her pictures to look at.

05:00 Dolly said she was obedient. Her mother wanted to find her and only had her nightgown so she made herself a dress from the curtains and found two non-matching shoes to wear. Someone found stockings for her and she ran around until she found Dolly. She begged to remain with her but she had to get permission and clean the bathrooms. Her mother did not find cleaning the bathrooms hard as they were beautiful. It was many months until Dolly could leave the hospital as the TB, typhus and heart condition needed to be cured. In six or seven months, the two received permission to go to the castle where their group lived. The King had given them a place to live and food to eat but no money and

little clothing. The experience was terrible and they were both unhappy. Every night one of the women asked Dolly to sleep with them as they loved children. Her mother had to give permission and it was difficult for both of them. Dolly's mother was a brilliant pianist and could write in many languages. She sent a letter to the Jewish Congress in Berne, Switzerland where the names of the survivors are listed. She wrote a five or six page letter in Polish and Yiddish asking for a few cents to buy stamps to correspond with her relatives in the US who had previously immigrated to Cuba.

- 10:00 She received a response from Managua, Nicaragua and responded that she needs money to take Dolly by train to Stockholm for her mouth surgery. Dolly's mother wanted to be a Jew again. She was born a Jew and was now among Christians. Of the 100 women, about 20 were Jews. She wanted to go to a Jewish place. She got a response with money with which she bought a watch. Then she thought she could make some money giving concerts. People thought it would not be possible for her mother to remember the music. Later she gave a concert at a Mexican palace and then her memory failed her. Her skill and technique were still excellent. They bought dresses and coats and took the train to the special hospital in Stockholm for Dolly's surgery. This was the first time that Dolly saw other small children. She was impressed that the other children had daily visitors but she had no one.
- 15:00 Again her mother stayed nearby and cleaned the bathrooms. During Dolly's first week at the hospital, they just fed her to strengthen her for the operation. They placed a tongue in her mouth and the food went down and she tasted it for the first time. It no longer came out of her nose. Her mother was happy when she was able to arrange to give a concert nearby and was happy to remember the music and earn a little money. There was a car accident and Dolly's mother broke both legs. She was not used to cars and drivers were not used to driving. She was in the hospital for two months with casts on her legs and Dolly could not see her. She had no visitors so the nurses told the visitors who brought toys and chocolate to other patients, to visit Dolly. They gave her candy or a flower but no toys. Her mother recuperated and visited her and brought a letter from the uncles.
- 20:00 One relative was Shaya (?) Gesuntheit. The uncles left Nicaragua because they were single and wanted to find Jewish girls. One went to New York, one to Miami, two to Mexico and one to Salvador. Although they left Nicaragua, the person who received the letter knew the Gesuntheits went to America and forwarded it to the uncle in New York. He sent them money for a ship to New York and enough for dresses for both. Her mother said they would take the ship to New York when she was cured. Her mother found one Jew in Sweden who visited her. Dolly had to wait a few months as they had to remove the new palate to see if the surgery was effective so she could eat and speak. It was the first time they performed such surgery and it worked properly. Her mother would often change her mood and languages rapidly and had a nervous tick on the side of her head and would pick up her shoulder to touch it. Her mother never cooked her a meal when

they were in Mexico nor helped her with homework. She never bought Dolly new uniforms or shoes when needed. Her mother no longer cared for food, clothes or for looking pretty.

25:00 They were in Sweden for one and one-half years. They went to New York early '47 where they saw a lot of cars. She and her mother threw up on the ship though they were in first class. The uncle met them at the ship and embraced them. Dolly got scared and tried to hide. The cars looked like animals and there were so many people. She was shocked to see children for the first time. They went to Macy's or Gimbel's and bought her a doll. She had a milk shake for the first time and she ate scrambled or fried egg. She thought this was another world from where she came from. New York did not seem like the same space as Europe. She could not understand why she was born in Europe instead of in the US. Dolly was thankful that her family brought her here. Her mother was thankful to walk in a Mexican garden and smell the flowers in Chapultepec Park. Her mother got some music in Sweden and played it in Mexico and also wrote poems. They stayed in New York for a week and then took the train to Mexico City through Laredo, Texas. They did not need a passport.

30:00 Neither of them had a birth certificate. They just had a Swedish pass. They were born in Vilna but did not want a Polish passport. The uncle paid a fee of a few thousand dollars for them in the US. He thought the Mexican climate is better where he had a nice house, a wife and a baby. They did not know Spanish and the uncle was not permitted to go through Immigration with them so it was a slow process. Finally, Dolly's mother wrote down their names and they crossed the border. They stopped at Monterey to visit an uncle on their way to Mexico City. Her mother was surprised by the large piano they had. Dolly was frightened by the bed and wanted to sleep under it. Her mother was afraid there would be no food the next day and the aunt told her to go to the refrigerator at any time. Her mother placed a mango, two bananas, a cup of milk and an avocado under her pillow and they all got squashed. She did this for months. Until the end of her days, she could not sleep during the night so she slept from 8 AM to noon. Dolly went to school and had a terrible experience with her teacher. Later at Mexican University she decided to be a Bible teacher which she did for 26 years. She was seven years old upon arrival and placed in first grade in a Jewish School where she studied Hebrew, Yiddish and Spanish.

35:00 The students collected the silver covering of chocolates and changed them in the Yiddish class. The girl in front gave the paper to the girl in the middle on her bench and then Dolly had the paper. Her teacher pulled her by the ear and she refused to return the next day but would not say why. The bleeding stopped and her mother was annoyed and said that she was lazy. Dolly could not admit to what had happened and went under the bed. Her aunt bought her a new dress and Dolly put on a starched uniform and got hysterical when she saw the teacher. Her aunt realized that something happened and a student told

her the incident. Dolly was transferred to a Jewish religious school and was happy there. **Tape 2, Side B.** She was beaten in Bergen-Belsen by a Capos woman and does not remember why. Her mother thought Dolly was going to die. Perhaps that is how her palate opened up.

- 40:00 They lived a year with the aunt and uncle and then her mother married a Mexican widower who lost his wife to cancer and later her mother died from cancer. The widower had two married children and a 16-year-old daughter. Her mother thought the widower was a good person but the uncle disagreed and wanted her to look for someone else. Her mother received money from Germany which they used to buy Dolly dresses and for her mother to travel to Canada and to the US. The new husband was stingy and never spoke to Dolly. Her mother was mentally sick and did not realize it. She died in 1957 when Dolly was 18. Dolly attended high school and worked at the stepfather's sweater company from 4 to 9 PM. She attended the University where she met her husband who was from Berlin. In 1936 he went to Belgium, Paris, Portugal, Spain and Cuba before his arrival in Mexico. They married in 1960 when she was 21. Dolly suffered as she was not attached to her mother as she wished. She had to get up at 7AM for her exams but her mother started playing the piano at 1 AM for hours which kept her awake. Her mother never made a meal in the kitchen. She worked in the factory and gave music lessons. She never told Dolly about getting her period; that she might get it late due to her experiences. She was small at 16 and her friends already got their period.
- 45:00 One day she tried to put her clothes on and suddenly found she outgrew all of them. Dolly got her period and got scared as her mother had not given her any information. Her mother did not have to cook as they had a maid. She bought kosher meat and taught the maid to cook it. When Dolly was 22 or 23 years old attending the university, she felt the need for counseling. She talked about the barracks and the concentration camps. She was very depressed as she was married a few years and had no children. The doctors said it was due to nerves. By that time, her mother, uncle and others had died and she felt the need for a family. All tests indicated she was fine. In 1967 she went to Margaret Sanger Hospital in New York and they said she had TB. No x-ray had been ordered for her in Mexico. Dolly went to a psychologist and became aware of the past. She remembered stones, bodies, barracks and the concentration camps. Before that, Dolly only recalled what her mother told her. Earlier she only remembered Sweden but after therapy, she recalled the concentration camp.
- 50:00 She did not remember her father. Her uncle in Israel sent pictures of her father. Then the psychologist told her to stop the therapy as she was trying to kill herself. She would go to therapy every Thursday after teaching high school in the morning. She was studying to obtain a Masters Degree to be a Hebrew teacher. She fell down the steps of her apartment and broke her right leg. She called the psychologist from the English Hospital and went to therapy the next week on crutches. Then she went to the supermarket and

fell down and broke the other leg. Again she canceled therapy. Her leg was in a cast and she saw the therapist the following week. After six weeks the cast was removed and she fell a third time. This time she was running down steps as was late so she broke her hand. She fell 22 steps and went to the hospital.

- 55:00 Everyone made fun of her as she fell so much. The psychologist said it is hard for Dolly to remember her past. She would spend two hours with the psychologist. Dolly was ashamed to speak as she was ashamed to be alive. People made fun of her. She spoke in front of 100 students in her Spanish literature class. She volunteered to read a poem and thought her Spanish was satisfactory but the teacher said, "Thanks, Miss Hirsch. This is the worse destroying a poem I ever heard as there was no intonation." Dolly spoke as she learned Spanish at age six and since then cannot speak in front of anyone. One day, the Psychologist said not to return as afraid the next time she will fall on her head. Dolly was blaming herself that she is alive and not her parents and ashamed that she was in the concentration camp. Her Jewish friends in Mexico had a beautiful childhood and did not understand or believe her. Dolly has a picture of the atrocities. She is ashamed why she is alive. Hitler punished her, took away her ancestors and roots and also her future. She went to New York for infertility tests. They put liquid into her uterus up to her shoulders at the Margaret Sanger Clinic. She stayed in New York for seven weeks and took an apartment. Her husband would go back and forth to Mexico as he was a Chemical Engineer.
- 60:00 Everything was fine and she got her entire body x-rayed. The doctor shouted at the nurse, "why are all the pictures white?" The nurse put in clean slides and again the result was all white. Six doctors met with her and her husband and reported that it was a miracle she came. She cannot forgive the Mexican doctors as they did not x-ray her and now it shows that she had TB all over her body. There were no symptoms as she had no coughing and no blood, just was slender. It would take a year or two to cure her. She had to take 22 to 24 pills daily. Afterwards, she would not be able to have children as will always have remains of the TB. In a later checkup, it was shown that she had TB and she was cured again.
- 65:00 They adopted Ari and Rachel Amana. They are wonderful children and they are a happy family. The children brought her happiness when they were little but she cried in her sleep and her husband woke her up and she did not remember that she cried. She and her husband are four years apart. When the children were two to five years old, she thought of herself and tried to give them everything that she did not have. Her daughter participated in the March of the Living. Both children belong to Jewish organizations. Dolly was invited to go on the March but her children did not want her to go. Dolly teaches Hebrew in the Emunah Yeshiva in Mexico City. Sometimes smells still bother her such as smells in a bathroom. She has some claustrophobia as cannot use a small elevator alone as would get hysterical. Dolly's mother spoke to her as an adult view of

the concentration camps but Dolly had a child's view. Her mother would say that she slept with Dolly but there were eight adults in the barracks with legs in every direction and they were squashed.

70:00 Dolly recalls the darkness, Germans speaking and the garbage can. When she was 10 years old, her mother told her that she had been in a garbage can. She thought that life started in Sweden as could not recall anything before. The psychologist was Jewish and with the university. Dolly was told to go to a non-Jewish psychologist but felt that a non-Jew might not understand her experiences. When she was in the Holocaust Museum on Friday, there were Spanish-speaking people walking behind her and when they came to the model of the gas chamber, the children asked the father why were the Jews gassed. He replied that the Jews in Germany were wealthy and controlled all the banks so the Germans got upset and punished them.

75:00 Dolly got mad and said that she is a survivor and there are German beasts who would have taken Indian, Mexican or Japanese just because Hitler was a murderer of humankind. People think just like this father who answered his children. That is why it is important that she promised that she would write a book on her experience. If not, two or three generations later might say it is a lie and never happened. We are survivors and should be proud to be Jews and all generation to come will know of the suffering and live free in the US and in Israel.

Dolly Bestandig

Tape 3 Side A

July 27, 1997

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Summary

00:00 Dolly ends her interview with her good feelings towards the Jews and G-d. She believes the Jews have a good future as they are special people who have good things to give the world. They have traditions to give their children and a legacy of good people, bright people and bad people. The Jews have a feeling to live. Dolly loves G-d and Israel with her statement of, "Am Yisrael Chai." The Jewish people will live to see their children grow up. She believes that G-d brought her to Mexico where she can work, study and be useful to others. She appreciates all the countries that gave the Jewish people an opportunity to be independent and do what you like. She has never returned to her birthplace in Europe. In 1968 she visited a cousin in Europe and they drove toward Munich to see a lawyer. When they got to the German border and saw the police, she had to turn back. If she had seen the lawyer, Dolly would have received more reparations.

Receiving reparations does not make her happy but she saves it for her children. The Germans cannot pay her for her life or for her relatives' lives. The Germans were responsible and they must take responsibility for what they did. She cannot blame the new generations for what their grandparents did. She is upset when she hears German. After hearing so much German, now she automatically adds German words when she speaks Yiddish. It upsets her when she hears German in the street as it reminds her of the shouting.

05:00